

## {In Archive} Loss of Louisiana Highway Could Cripple Domestic Oil Supply

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### Study: Loss Of Louisiana Highway Could Cripple Domestic Oil Supply

By: Phil Leggiere

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A US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) study has found that temporary disruption of Louisiana Highway LA1 in southern Lafourche Parish, Louisiana near the energy hub of Port Fourchon, LA could potentially cripple the nation's domestic energy supply as well as cause major damage to the economy.

The report, titled Louisiana Highway 1/Port Fourchon Study, concluded that a 90 day closure of Port Fourchon as a result of this loss of highway access could result in a reduction of up to \$7.8 billion in American gross domestic product, while significantly impacting domestic oil and gas production for at least a decade.

The National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC) of the United States Department of Homeland Security and the National Incident Management Systems and Advanced Technologies (NIMSAT) Institute at University of Louisiana at Lafayette collaborated on the study.

Since 2005, the vulnerable two-lane highway, which runs from Golden Meadow to Leeville, LA, has been overtopped by storm surge and closed to traffic for 23 days collectively. It is the only road to Port Fourchon, which services over 90 percent of deepwater energy production in the Gulf of Mexico and supports 16% of this nation's energy. The study found that mean sea level rise could cause LA 1 road closures of 90 or more consecutive days per year by the late 2030's, and a powerful storm could result in a 90-day outage even earlier.

LA 1 is the only means of land access to Port Fourchon, which services 16 - 18 percent of our nation's domestic and imported oil and gas. Additionally it is the only means of land access to Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP), which handles 14% of U.S. imported crude oil and is now servicing the OCS. LOOP's pipelines are connected to 50% of U.S. refinery capacity.

Just as troubling, the report said, LA 1 is the only means of evacuation for approximately 35,000 people, including 6,000 offshore shore workers, in the event of a disaster and the only means of land access for oil spill response for Port Fourchon and LOOP.

"Finally, our federal government is officially acknowledging the immense value of this vulnerable highway to the national economy and our national energy supply," says LA 1 Coalition Chairman Ted Falgout. "This credible national study provides very compelling reasons why the federal government should invest in construction of an elevated highway from Golden Meadow to Leeville, providing a continuous 19-mile secure highway route to Port Fourchon."

A proposed nine-mile elevated highway between Golden Meadow and Leeville costing \$320 million, known as Phase 2 of the LA 1 Improvement Project, would replace the vulnerable highway section evaluated in the NISAC/NIMSAT study.

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